

Sports

## **George School's Alexandra Long on pace for perfect dozen**

*By Mary Jane Souder Correspondent*

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The George School senior is on pace to rack up four varsity letters in three sports for the Cougars and is a fourth-year captain on the girls basketball team

Alexandra Long was born to lead.

That fact was abundantly clear when the George School senior stepped onto the basketball court as a freshman and was elected captain of her team. The situation created a quandary for coach George Long, who also is her father, so he presented it to girls athletic director Nancy Bernardini.

"Nancy said 'We don't usually have freshmen as captains,'" recalled Long. "We played in our first tournament game against the Academy of the New Church, and after Nancy watched her play, watched her lead the team, watched her direct the girls on the court, she said to me after the game, 'That was a good choice. She really is a true leader.'

"I didn't tell her until I spoke to the three seniors on the team. When I said to them, 'Look, I don't know how you feel about this but Alexandra was voted captain. I wasn't sure what to say, so I didn't say anything before the game.' They all looked at me and said, 'We know because we all voted for her. We want her to be the captain.'"

Three years later, Long is in her fourth year as team captain, a position she fell into naturally from the outset.

"I feel as though I can't even explain what leadership means to me if questioned about that on a form I have to fill out or something because it feels like something I've always known how to do, and I say that in the most humble way I possibly can," Alexandra said. "I feel like when I was chosen to be a captain I was really excited about it.

"I was excited about the next four years because when I first came in our basketball team really wasn't very strong and there weren't very high expectations. I put relatively high expectations on myself and my teammates, and I wanted to uphold those the best I could. I would have done that regardless of the title of captain."

It's not a coincidence the program's fortunes have changed. Nor is it surprising that Long was also a captain for George School's soccer team and will be a captain of this spring's lacrosse team. She is all-area performer in both lacrosse and soccer.

Long will graduate with 12 varsity letters after starting on varsity for all three since she was a freshman.

“All my siblings growing up were involved in sports,” said Alexandra, the youngest of four children. “One of my sisters played soccer at Williams, and my brother played basketball through high school and college (at Amherst). Both my parents played sports.”

Asked to name her favorite, Long can’t do it.

“I would say basketball has been the most meaningful to me, whether that’s because of the connection I’ve had with my dad or I’ve learned to love it a lot,” she said. “It’s been great to play for him. I truly think he’s a great coach regardless of whether he’s my dad or not and I feel like it’s really been a special connection.”

Participating in three sports has broadened the group of people she interacts with.

“I really love being on a team, and that’s why all my three sports are team sports,” Long said.

She has already been contacted by coaches of all three sports at Bates College where she is an early admit.

“I said this when I was speaking on Senior Day — Alexandra, in every single sport that she plays is like a coach,” George Long said. “You know how they say coach on the floor — she’s actually a coach on and off the floor because she literally knows all of our plays, she teaches concepts because she’s been doing this stuff since she was in fourth grade. She loves the game, she teaches the game.

“I said I hope she becomes a coach eventually and at a very high level because she understands sports, and she’s always been that way since she was a little girl.”

An excellent student, Long is the student council representative on the school board. She’s also active in the Student Inclusion Committee.

Long is uncertain of her major but chose Bates, in part, because it’s a liberal arts school.

“Over my time at George School, I’ve really learned that I want to spend my time helping other people the best I possibly can regardless of what I do that in,” she said. “Whether it’s as a coach, a non-profit route, teaching or something like that because that’s been very important to me and how people have helped me grow and how I’ve seen myself start to help others grow.”